

# CPAC MEETING

## October 8, 2003

### Those in attendance:

Peggy Ableman, Judge, Superior Ct	Joe Bakker, WILM News Radio
Jennifer Barber, CPAC Chair	Sen. Patricia Blevins, State Senate
M. Jane Brady, Attorney General	Mike Chalmers, News Journal
Candace Charkow, DFS	Tania Culley, Child Advocate
Susan Cczyk, Director, DCMHS	Allan DeJong, MD – AI Dupont
Karen Derasmo, Prevent Child Abuse	Cari DeSantis, Secretary, DSCYF
Mary Lou Edgar, ICOA	Peter Feliceangeli, DAG
Carlyse Giddins, Director DFS	Trish Hearn, Exec. Asst, DSCYF
John Humphrey, Exec. Director CAC	Michael Kelly, NCCPD
Emily Knearl, State Senate	Chandlee J. Kuhn, Chief Judge, Fam Ct
Laura Miles, Deputy Director, DFS	Janice Mink, Co-Chair Grassroots
Julia Pearce, Exec. Director, CPRB	Anne Pedrick, OCA
Joseph Smack, Exec. Assist DFS	Patricia Stewart, Commissioner Fam Ct
Linda C. Wolfe, Dept. of Ed.	

Chair called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.

Approval of minutes from the July 9, 2003 meeting with the following corrections: (1) Addition of Sen. Blevins' name to list of attendees; (2) Page 2 -- Addition of Chief Judge Kuhn's name as Co-Chair of the Legislative Subcommittee; (3) Page 3 – Change of 14% decrease in reports to 1% decrease in reports; (4) Page 6 – Under public comment, change to “Lynn Shreve of the CASA Program reported that as of July 8, 2003, the program was actively representing 408 children.”

### **DFS update:** Presentation by Secretary Cari DeSantis

Everything done in the Children's Department gears around “Think of the Child First”. Over 8,000 children serviced by the Department. Extremely large department with lots of responsibility. Children's needs now are much greater than years ago, services need to be child focused and service children holistically. They are in the business of caring but they cannot take care of the caring part without the business part since they are a \$145M agency. They offer a child- focused system of care by providing Holistic service, inspired workforce, leading edge management and dedicated partnerships. Need volunteer efforts, private philanthropy.

### Challenges undertaken and met:

- Serving more kids in home
- Serving more kids in community-based programs
- Serving more kids in state and closer to home
- Achieving better outcomes for more kids
- Eliminating \$9.7m million budget deficit

65% of budget spent on 19% of children prior to 2001 for out of home, residential or institutions costs.

#### Improving Services

- Foster Care Reform
- Community Services Re-engineering
- Broader, better deployment of mental health services
- Holistic Services Team-capstone of the administration. No question that these kids go from DFS to CMH to YRS. They currently have 45 cases under HST. They will be starting a second team in Kent/Sussex later this year.
- Individual Residential Treatment

Just opened home for homeless children released from Ferris with nowhere to go (Ministry of Caring – House of Joseph). More kids in community based programs. 14.5% of children in out of home care which is down from 18.3 % in 2001. Each percentage point equates to \$1.2M. The number of children in care is increasing.

Among most critical need for community based services/support:

- Specialized physical and medical foster care services
- In home parent aide services
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Intensive outpatient services\*\* (most significant need)
- Specialized services for developmentally disabled children
- Wraparound services
- Respite care

Our first priority is to keep kids safe: in their homes, in their communities, in 24-hour residential settings. To achieve this we need: appropriate level of staff, experienced staff, and appropriate workload.

#### Caseload & Fully Functioning Employee Averages

Statewide based on full-time employees, the numbers look good. Prior to doing these reports, DSCYF had no idea how many fully functioning staff there were. Fully functioning means trained, experienced and carrying a full caseload. Full time employee numbers not enough. Statewide numbers under SB142 would not have reflected the caseload problem. Statewide investigation workers as of September 2003, show 47 fully functioning workers and 12 full time employees who are not fully functioning. NCC1 shows 9 out of 14 investigators fully functioning. NCC2 shows 11 out of 18, Kent shows 11 out of 11, and Sussex shows 15 out of 15. Statewide treatment positions indicate 72 of the 75 positions to be fully functioning. Concerns were identified in NCC1 and NCC2 investigations. These jobs are the most stressful and burnout is high. It is a management challenge to retain investigation staff.

Caseload averages – SB142 sets an investigation caseload standard at 14 with a ceiling of 16. If DSCYF exceeds the ceiling, can trigger request for additional staff. Statewide

averages under SB142 for 2003 were within standards. However, if one looks at fully functioning (FFE) caseloads, the numbers are higher. As of September 2003, SB142 investigation averages were 9.6 and fully functioning were 10.26. Broken out by regions, in September 2003, NCC1 was 8.1/9.67, NCC2 was 10.1/12.91, Kent was 10.1/10.09, and Sussex was 10/8.88. NCC1 figures went from a 21.29 FFE average in June to 9.67 in September. Those numbers also reflected 7 of the 7 workers over standard in June for NCC1 and no workers over standard in September. Statewide, 26 workers were over standard in June, while only 5 remained over standard in September. They are not going to close cases just to close a case and this is an administrative mandate. One region can drive the averages.

SB 142 was created at a time when there was 48% caseworker turnover. At the end of Fiscal Year 2003, there was a 16% turnover rate. So far this quarter it is 3%. Investigation turnover is 23.7%. As long as workers feel supported and are more experienced, they are more likely to stay. These jobs are not paying a whole lot and it is a management challenge to keep turnover rate low. Between January of 2003 and July of 2003, 22 trainees (overhires) were hired. The epilogue language in the budget authorizes up to 15 overhire positions. The primary goals of the Department are to never have a vacancy in a frontline position, to have all frontline positions fully trained and to have a rolling pool of overhires ready to step in to positions as vacancies occur.

It was asked how caseloads were cut 50% with a slight increase in staff? Nine out of the 22 over-hires were hired in May. In addition, five casual/seasonals assisted full-time workers with collaterals and other duties in August and September. They are also exploring a mid-shift proposal to boost worker's morale. Currently have 7 overhires in place, all of whom are in the earlier stages of training. It was asked why not take the "gift" of 15 overhires at all times? The Secretary believes the Department is masking a problem if that is done. Never have 15 people leave in a month. Each quarter, goal is to have enough overhires in wings to step in positions. Overhires are a great idea and we need to have them. DFS is allowed to have up to 15 overhires, but do not know what the perfect number is. 15 was the number when turnover was 48%. Agreed that decrease in turnover is partially attributable to the overhire positions. Believes it is time to look at SB142 to determine if standards are still appropriate. Complexity of cases is troubling. Need to determine the appropriate amount of work to maintain safety and make progress (Are the children better off for being in the Department's care?). Must also focus on caseworkers doing casework instead of administrative functions.

The Department's goal is to have all fully functioning employees in all full time employee positions and a complement of overhires in various stages of being "ready to go." The Department is submitting hiring requests to the Governor every 7-8 weeks. Started in January of 2001 with a \$6 million deficit. As of June 30, 2003, had saved \$9.7 million for the State. \$1.5 million was from managing overtime in 24-hour facilities.

Jennifer Barber suggested a discussion to brainstorm about what information is important to the Commission to keep apprised of caseloads in the Department. Jennifer asked Commission members to review the charts provided at the July CPAC meeting and this

meeting to determine what level of information the Commission would like to review and the frequency with which the reviews should occur.

**Pending Issues from last meeting:**

Commission Bylaws -- Copies of bylaws were disseminated and reviewed. Suggested a possible executive committee that can meet between meetings to address legislation, etc. Janice Mink made a motion to form a subcommittee to review bylaws and Chief Judge Kuhn seconded the motion. Volunteers – Janice Mink, Pat Stewart, Trish Hearn, Mary Lou Edgar.

Reporting required under SB142 is not a good indication of what is going on within DFS. Need further review by committee. Suggested actual caseloads and numbers of bodies not just averages. Does not require reporting of vacancies or number of workers over standard. Need a committee to explore the standards and see if they are still appropriate. Review the information (averages) that go into the SB 142 report and is it accurately reflecting necessary information.

Janice Mink made a motion and seconded by Linda Wolfe.

Volunteers – Janice Mink, Jennifer Barber, Trish Hearn, Patricia Blevins, Tania Culley, Carlyse Giddins

**Legislative update:**

Missed SB 134, it eliminates Family Court custody investigations. Legislative subcommittee to review and bring recommendations to committee. It was decided that a copy would be given once and CPAC would be provided amendments thereafter. Julia Pierce and Jennifer Barber were added to this subcommittee chaired by Chief Judge Kuhn. Next Legislative Subcommittee Meeting, December 10<sup>th</sup> at NCCCH, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor.

**Foster Care:**

Foster Care subcommittee has not met recently. The Foster Care Reform Forum recently released their Blueprint for Foster Care Excellence. Copies were brought for circulation. CMH has taken subcommittee's recommendations and prepared a six-hour class for foster parents. The sign up response has been overwhelming.

**Training:** The AIC Training Consortium continues to meet and establish a baseline of curriculum and target audience. The website has been established but more agencies need to utilize the resource. The goal is to streamline training by having presentations from police academy, DFS, etc. to then create a standardized curriculum and encourage the providing of similar information across disciplines. This will also encourage further cross training. Consortium will inventory what is currently offered, assess the commonalities and determine what areas need to be strengthened. The goal is to also build in accountability as to who has been trained on what.

**Community Notification Taskforce:** Executive Order #49 has been signed by the Governor, continuing the work of the Task Force. It will also focus on the prevention aspect. Work is being done with the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention as well. The Task Force awaits appointment of a Chair.

**Best Interests Subcommittee:**

They are in the educational stage by viewing programs and deciding what will work. Still determining what their exact focus will be with respect to “best interests”. Next meeting 11/11/03.

**Other Agencies**

**Family Court** – Chief Judge Kuhn has been in the position for three months. Judge Coppadge starts next week. She will be starting to hear cases immediately due to need. It is anticipated that she will have a full caseload by 1/1/04.

**Child Mental Health** – Drug court is going well. They have served 44 of anticipated 60 which was their target. This has brought about shortened length of stay in facilities (42% decrease). CMH will be looking at the recidivism rate as well. They have reduced the money spent on residential treatment by fifty percent. Length of stay in intensive outpatient (IOP) and outpatient treatment is rising. There is much need to expand the provider community to meet our kids’ needs. CMH is also active on dependency committee so that children also receive community services needed once they have completed their juvenile probation time. CMH is working with the adult Mental Health system to help children that age out of the juvenile Mental Health system to enter the adult system without extended lag time. Individual Residential Treatment (IRT) homes have a goal of 15 children. Have served 13 children.

They are providing substance abuse counseling through staff in NCC, in SC & KC. Will schedule presentation of statistics for CPAC at next meeting in January.

**CAC** – Dover center is doing fine and they are overcoming the challenges. Trying to find appropriate medical services in Kent County. The biggest battle is the mental health assessments in Kent/Sussex County. St. Jones staff is unable to assist at this time and it is difficult to find mental health providers who specialize in child abuse and neglect. In NCC, 50% of people referred for mental health evaluations/follow up, are not showing up. Continuing to explore options with providers and the VCCB. The Milford site has moved to Georgetown and opened for business on 10/2/03. Children & Families First has allocated space to the CAC.

**DOJ** - nothing to report.

**Law Enforcement**– nothing to report.

**Other Business:**

Janice Mink made the suggestion for an expedited review panel to review child death cases in which the child or the child’s family received services from the Children’s Department in the last year, but where the cause of death was not conclusively determined to be abuse or neglect. These cases could take months to reach the child death review panels. It was also suggested that children who experience serious near

death injuries be reviewed as well for systemic issues when the family has been active with DFS. These recommendations could be shared with CPAC. A subcommittee on exploring a near death review panel will be convened and Judge Peggy Ableman will be the Chair. Those who volunteered include the following: Jennifer Barber, Janice Mink, Dr. DeJong, Tania Culley, Senator Blevins. It was suggested that Mary Ball Morton be asked to bring the criteria for an RCA both to this subcommittee and to the January Commission meeting.

**CPAC meeting dates for 2004:**

January 14, 2004

April 7, 2004

May 19 – Annual Legislative Meeting

July 14, 2004

October 13, 2004